

Introduction to Action Research

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Action Research

- **Action Research:** Systematic procedures to gather information about and improve teaching, student learning, and/or other educational processes
 - **Systematic:** (Next Slides)
 - **Procedures:** Research Design, Participants, Instruments, Procedures for Data Collection
 - **Gather Information:** All teaching practices should be based on a well-grounded foundation of information for best practices, NOT tradition or convenience
 - **Improve teaching, learning, educational processes:** Ultimate goal of action research

Foundation of Research: Potential Sources of Evidence

- Authority
 - According to Prof. Adetunde, most human beings have an external locus of causality.
- Tradition
 - Massaging babies helps them grow better.
- Common Sense
 - The more a person studies, the better grades they earn.
- Rumor
 - UniJos is increasing school fees.
- Observation
 - 98% of Nigerians like Maltina but only 2% of Americans like Maltina.

- Fully less than 10 percent of Nigerian university dons have children living in that mess called Nigeria, let alone inside the filthy chicken coops that pass for classrooms from preschool to the tertiary level...
- Ten percent? I made it up of course. I am a Nigerian intellectual. We are lazy like that. It could be less even.
- <http://xokigbo.wordpress.com/2013/09/21/asuu-is-on-strike-again-who-cares-smh/>

Foundation of Research

- Research only allows for data from **systematic observation**
 - All human beings make observations in their daily lives.
 - Based on these casual observations, all people develop theories about education, psychology, human behavior and thought, etc.
 - These observations are oftentimes very flawed because of the limited contexts in which the observations are made

Foundation of Research

- Research seeks explanations of the world that expand beyond one person's biases through **systematic observation**
- Research methods are tools that enable researchers to make systematic observations beyond their own biases
- This helps researchers develop more accurate/truthful explanations of education, psychology, and human thought and behavior

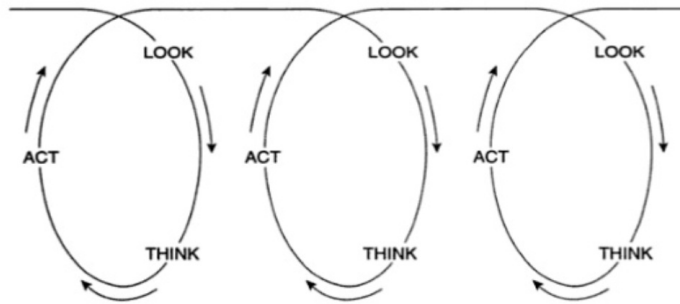
Action Research

- **Goal:** Improved practice by studying problems, systematically collecting data, creating action plans, and then reflecting on the effectiveness of the action plan
- Types of Action Research
 - **Practical Action Research:** Teachers identify and research problems in their own classroom
 - **Participatory Action Research:** Improve the quality of practice by empowering individuals and organizations to participate in the research process

Difference between Action Research and Traditional Research

- **Traditional Research:** Goal is to generalize the conclusion beyond the sample to a target population. **Action Research:** Goal is to improve practice in one particular classroom/school
- **Traditional Research** has very formal research procedures to ensure strict control of variables. **Action Research** has looser procedures to suit the context of research
- **Action Research** identifies current problems within a particular classroom/school whereas **Traditional Research** identifies problems based on a review of research literature
- **Traditional Research** requires considerable advanced training. **Action Research** can be done by any teacher/practitioner

Action Research Interacting Spiral (Stringer, 2007)



Action Research Process

- **Look:** Gather information for a well-grounded understanding of the experience and perspectives of the key participants
 - What is happening from the observer's perspective?
 - What is happening – and why – from the perspective of key stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers)?
- **Think:** Analyse what is happening to better understand the nature of the problem
 - Theorize about how/why the problem is existing
- **Act:** Develop an Action Plan
 - Implement the Action Plan
 - Evaluate the Action Plan → Collect data to evaluate the effectiveness
- Cycle back into Look